

Applications

Special Children

by Ron Ball

During the past 15 years I have been associated with Northwood Children's Home which is a residential treatment center for emotionally disturbed children, ages 6-12. Many children enter the center with a limited range of play skills because they have not been exposed to appropriate modeling for play. Since children relate to each other through play, they don't know how to get involved with others.

The children at the center tend to lack motor, cognitive and perceptual skills. The absence of these skills makes for experiences of rejection and frustration, often resulting in low self-esteem. But through games, creative play and cooperative games can improve a child's self-esteem and confidence, and as a result their ability to interact socially and develop physical skills as well.

Games can be used with children to deal with particular problems such as trust, sharing, supporting or response and completing tasks. Games with high-powered "I'm" roles can be useful in giving a child with low status feelings of being "the leader," thereby improving his/her self image. The opposite effect takes place when a child with a great deal of control is given a low-powered "I'm" role and learns trust, sharing and cooperation.

New Games is a fun alternative. The proof is in a comment from one of the children: "These games are interesting to me because I'm laughing inside." When being institutional to low laughing inside, it can be excellent alternative to a traditional recreation program.

Ron Ball is a New Games Field Rep and has assisted several New Games trainings. He is the Recreational Coordinator at the Northwood Children's Home, 734 College St., Duluth, MN 55811.

Applications

Play Education—Educational Play

by Laura Alfano

Here at Jasper Middle School, New Games are as common as bells ringing for class changes. We've incorporated the New Games concepts, and the games themselves, into several facets of our physical education program.

Whenever the gym contains an outsider with ever-growing tension, sometimes Ducks and Cows or other animals. The children use their knowledge about the environment in a playful manner. Sometimes the gym rings with screams and laughter, and other times it's quiet. Even though the girls and boys usually want to "play" a game out of my class, there are favorites that they ask to play again and again.

Some games, like *admirer* with a foam ball to negotiate skills and *hunker hunker* are ideal for in-

Games



We may not get to hear the sound of one hand clapping during this game, but we're likely to encounter just about every other distraction in this test of concentration and presence of mind.

We all sit in a circle, facing each other. One of us starts the action by placing either hand, with fingers extended, on top of our head while saying "Yin." (Very easy so far.) Now, whoever goes next depends on which way the starter's fingers are pointing. If he used her left hand, her fingers would be pointing to the person in the circle to her right, and so that person would go next. If he used her right hand, her fingers would point to the left, and so the person to the left of the starter would continue. (Logical enough.)

What does that next person do? He places his hand, with fingers extended, under his chin and says "Yang." (Oh, sorry. And whatever way his fingers are pointing, left or right, indicates who in the circle goes next.) If you're following all this, it will either be the original starter, or the person two places around the circle from the starter.

Now, that third person has the best part of

all. She performs a one-handed clap, pointing her fingertips toward anyone else in the circle, while uttering no sound at all. (The sound of the famous Zen Clap.)

Whichever way her fingertips point indicates a new starter, who gets the whole process rolling again by placing one hand on top of his head and saying "Yin." The game continues. "Yin," "Yang," silent clap, at as rapid a pace as possible, until some distracted soul either makes the wrong motion, says the wrong word, or goes out of turn.

For such a transgression, this daydreamer is banished from the circle of Zen Masters. However, in the true New Games style, he gets to remain in the game as a Satori Hecker. In this role, he's allowed to stand just outside the circle and do or say just about anything (except of teaching a player) to try to make someone else cheat. Whoever goes just the outside of the Hecker's, until there are just a few Zen Masters remaining, trying to stay centered amidst a cacophony of confusion. When there are only three Masters left, it's time for a new round.

trama. Our sixth grade plays *admirer* during the first intramural schedule in order to improve their throwing and catching skills. They also learn good sportsmanship and team cooperation. *Hunker Hunker* has become a track and field event, which develops individual physical skills in a competitive game.

What the students say:

"I like New Games because all you have to do is get out there and play your hardest."

Karen Williams
Occasionally we use a game like *killer* to pull a dull week together. For a day or more, our "killer" stalks his/her prey only within the confines of the class. The game lasts no longer than a week, and we may have several "killers" during that time. We do outside work in conjunction with *killer* and the kids separate the fantasy and the reality with care. New Games is more than just a good time. The

What the students say:

"I like New Games because everybody is a leader and not just one big leader."

Sherri Aldridge
Concepts and philosophy permeate the entire program. Fair play, good sportsmanship, self-referring skills and concern for fellow players are gymnasium golden rules. The children demand respect from one another and most of the time they have no problem getting it.

New Games is an exciting learning/teaching tool. We've also integrated New Games into our more traditional physical education programs. If you'd like more information, we'd be happy to share our experiences with you.

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Games

elbowtag



Refereeing

Are You Serious?

by Mike Berman

human behavior skills? Startled, you turn around. (The rest hadn't recognized human behavior skills. Sure they thought it was great fun and they enjoyed having fun around the children's gymnasium.)

The conversation continued, but you began to realize that somebody saw through you. Somebody understood what you were doing, recognized the clown hat as the hat of a person with a special talent and skill. You feel good about that. Maybe you were beginning to think that all these fun and games were frivolous, didn't really have much meaning. But you are reminded otherwise.

"By the way," they say, "Would you do a festival for my school?" You can't. That's great. I'll call you with the details. There it is; you've been uncovered, taken seriously. You survey a now empty field, the sound of mixed laughter still echoing in your ears. You recall your conversation, feel renewed knowing that it works. New Games works. Take a group of people, any group, and you, the referee, can transform them into a community.

That's what it's all about. A few weeks later, a new field. Unpack the nerf balls, put out the traffic cones and hoopie ropes, and psych yourself up for the down town.

Have you been taken seriously lately? Mike Berman is a New Games Foundation Field Representative and is the Executive Director of Camden County Parks, Cherry Hill, NJ.

What Kind of Phoom Am I?

by Charlie Steffens

I don't intend to speak through a place of vast wisdom like the all-knowing PRU, but there are some things which will be phun that me to share. It's been phun years since my widdle and I played our

A simple twist to the world's oldest game transforms it into a new favorite, and a reliable way to raise the activity level of virtually any group.

Let's all get in pairs and have each pair link elbows, while keeping our outside elbows bent and our hands on our waists. We'll choose someone to be it and someone to be a runner. It tries to tag the runner, of course, but the twist is that the runner can sink his elbows with any free arm, on any pair. This releases the other member of the pair as the new runner. If it tags the runner, she's the new it.

The referee should make sure that players do take advantage of the link-up feature so that everyone doesn't end up watching Susie chase Tim around the block. Also, if it gets crowded, suggest that he link up with one pair and release a new it.

The pairs can be arranged in a circle or just randomly placed. Try having the pairs facing opposite directions, in "wing your partner" style. (Be aware of flying elbows into tender parts.) There are opportunities here for some elaborate variations, but just the basic game should keep most people participating and gaining. This is a particularly good game for young children and adults to play together.

phun New Games. It's changed my life, that's phur sure. I guess it allowed a metamorphosis to occur in the kind of phoom I could be.

Phun in phun games, you can't wait anything new phun to get a phun. Without any phun in it, I could accomplish that phun in a competitive open, like tennis with my widdle. Instead, was the Terrific, a "better" player. I was my mission to win phur both up. This phlood phalaxy phlood phun tennis phun, everywhere and was quickly phollowed by phlagran, phrogny and phloze disgusting phalaxy expressions. The purpose of the latter was to inspire my widdle to perform more competitive and phun. Phun in phun, you can live without that kind oph phun while I played that kind oph phun.

"Sound phamiliar to anyone? Logically it works out like this. No phun was more phun but it wasn't really any phun.

New Games gave me a chance to choose to be a real phun. The choice allowed me to take Webster's various definitions and phoon on "to play or improve a comic role." It's a phine phoom I am phur sure. The phlozoff is phibiting to enjoy phur ph of my being. Liph is a game and can be played hard, and phun, and with nobody phun.

As my New Games phlozoff grows, I phind phun almost everywhere. I phind myself phooling around with acoustic guitars in stowaway oph tax buildings; it's by phat the best phine I've phund to play human game. A ten year old just taught me a game called car jumping. All you need is a pedestrian overpass. You just jump into the air every time a car goes by; you can't come down until the car has passed completely under you. Rush hour traffic and semi trucks are killers, but you can always jump lanes unless you're playing team-car-jumping rules, or unless you change the team rules.

Hey, even language isn't something to take so seriously. Emotions, I've phigured out what kind oph phoom I want to be.

Charlie Steffens (Charlie Stephens) is a New Games Phoundation Field Representative from Camden, AZ. He's a very phun-loving recreation consultant.